DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 267 613 FL 015 558

AUTHOR Delpit, Lisa D.
TITLE Seeing with Our Own Eyes, Speaking in Our Own Voices: An Experiment in Language, Culture and Education in Papua New Guinea. Discussion Draft.
PUB DATE Feb 85
NOTE 50p.; Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 31-April 4, 1985). Appendices contain small print.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Awareness; Experimental Programs; *Folk Culture; Foreign Countries; Language Maintenance; *Language of Instruction; Literacy Education; *Native Language Instruction; Official Languages; *Pidgins; Primary Education; Program Descriptions; *School Entrance Age
IDENTIFIERS *Papua New Guinea

ABSTRACT

A recently implemented program in a decentralized provincial district of Papua New Guinea delays the entry of children into English-medium primary school for two years, during which time the children are taught literacy in a village-based school in their indigenous language, a pidgin, with the local customs and culture as the basis of the curriculum. The teachers are individuals chosen by the villagers themselves as representative of the village values. These teachers are given a short teacher training course. The plan was introduced in response to public pressure and the work of university students. The program is significant in four ways: (1) its conception and development at the local level; (2) the fact that it exists at all in a multilingual, newly-emerging nation with limited resources; (3) its acknowledgment that cultural differences need not be politically divisive, but with support, can promote good relations throughout the country; and (4) its resolution of the debate over native languages versus the colonial language as the medium of instruction, with neither being sacrificed for the sake of the other. Four pages of references conclude the document. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED267613

"Seeing With Our Own Eyes, Speaking In Our Own Voices: An Experiment in Language, Culture and Education in Papua New Guinea

Discussion Draft

Lisa D. Delpit
University of Alaska-Fairbanks
College of Human & Rural Development

February 1985

Paper prepared for the American Education Research Association
Annual Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
March 31 - April 4, 1985

FL 015558

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Lisa D Delpit

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

"Seeing With Our Own Eyes, Speaking in Our Own Voices":

An Experiment in Language, Culture and Education in Papua New Guinea

> When the Whitemen came we thought that they were our ancestors returning, so how could we question their ways? They put our children inside buildings so how could we teach our forefathers' knowledge to our children when they were shut up inside and we had to stand on the outside?
>
> --old Huli man, Southern Highlands,
> Papua New Guinea
> (Quoted in Cheetham, 1979)

How is education to be structured in a newly independent colony of 3,000,000 people who speak by most estimates more than 700 indigenous languages? A country with limited educational resources in which 86% of the population lives in traditionally-structured rural villages where communication to the outside world is difficult, if not impossible, and where rugged terrain allows access to some places only by an airplane ride followed by several days' walk?

That is the predicament facing Papua New Guinea. Several models have been tried in the past hundred years or so since contact with the "whitemen" and with Western culture, but for the last 20 years, the overwhelming model has been English-medium instruction from grade one, with an emphasis on Western-based curriculum and attitudes. Yet even in the 1980's no more than 25% of the indigenous population has a functional knowledge of English, and the vast majority of young people who attend primary school remain in their villages where they seldom hear English or have the opportunity to use it.

The people in the North Solomons Province (one of 20 such decentralized provincial districts in the country) have begun a brave new experiment. Allowed greater control of education by the decentralization of educational administration powers to the provinces, the North Solomons Province, or NSP,

initiated in 1979 the Viles Tok Ples Skul scheme (Village Tok Ples Schools, where tok ples is the Tok Pisin[1] word meaning indigenous language of the area). The scheme delays the entry of children into English-medium primary school for two years. It is village-based, uses the indigenous language of the area as the medium of instruction, teaches literacy in that language, uses the culture and customs of the area as a major basis of curriculum content, and employs as teachers individuals chosen by the villages who best represent the values of that village, but who receive only short-course teacher training.

The scheme was initiated in response to public pressure, by a working group of North Solomons students and a staff member of the University of Papua New Guinea, as part of the North Solomons Education Research Project. This Project was established at the end of 1978 following consultation between the University and provincial government representatives. The working group drew together, within the one institution of the tok ples school, a number of areas of concern which had been expressed by community leaders at a two-day forum held by the provincial government in which participants were invited to air their feelings about the government and the state of education.

That these were the preoccupations of many people was confirmed by a survey carried out in June-July, 1979 by an augmented research team of ten university students and graduates, who interviewed -- in depth and in their own language -- parents, school boards, and community (local) government members in rural areas across the province. Community wishes and aspirations which emerged were for pre-schooling for children before Grade 1 in community

---

[1]"Tok Pisin," or more colloquially, "Pidgin," is one of the two lingua francae of Papua New Guinea.

school;[2] delayed entry into Grade 1 until children were nine or ten years old; mother tongue literacy; and an education for the young in the custom, culture and acceptable behavior of their local community and language group.

In 1982, after two years of existence, what was the actual state of the program? How close had it come to achieving its stated goals? Those were the questions national and provincial government leaders wanted answered. And that was the basis upon which the country of Papua New Guinea allowed this writer into the country as a researcher in February, 1982, following one year's communication and planning with national and provincial government personnel and VTPS officials.

CONTEXT

The issue of whether or not to make use of mother tongues as media of instruction (MTMI) has long been argued in many Third World settings. Among scholars who promote MTMI, one can find diverse reasons for its advocacy. Some strongly advocate mother tongue education because, since many people in Third World settings achieve no more than a primary education, the curriculum must use a language of instruction which accelerates, rather than retards access to the content of education (Afolayan, 1976; Lambert and Sidoti, 1979). Bernard Spolsky argues that utilizing MTMI in Third World education might allow communities to control their access into the technological world, "to find some kind of synthesis rather than to be forced into the absolute choice of modernism or traditionalism" (Spolsky, 1978:283). Other scholars have suggested that MTMI can help ease the young child into the alien school setting, thereby forestalling damage to his or her self-concept (Ojerinde, 1968; Larson and Davis, 1981).

---

[2]The term used in Papua New Guinea for primary school.

All this is not to suggest that advocacy of MTMI is absolute. Indeed, most of Africa (Awoniyi, 1976; Ansre, 1973) and the vast majority of Oceania and the South Pacific (Benton, 1978 and 1981), for example, provide education only in the colonial languages. Several arguments are most often lodged against mother tongue instruction: It is prohibitively expensive (Bull, 1964; Heyneman, 1979); it could intrude upon traditional religious and ritual practices best kept out of schools (Spolsky, 1977); it could undermine the attempts of multilingual countries to promote national unity (discussed in Fishman et al., 1968); it might retard individuals' acquisition of a "world" language and thus limit wage-earning capacity (Anderson, 1981; Benton, 1978; Bull, 1955; Ramos et al., 1967); and that mother tongue languages are conceptually deficient for modern education (Ramos et al., 1967).

Given this plethora of concerns, it is no wonder that choosing the language medium of instruction for schools in most of the Third World is so difficult. Attempts to choose one, or even several, languages for Third World educational purposes are fraught with controversy.

In recent years, the field of language planning has developed to assist policy makers in making decisions about language choice, especially where conflict surrounds the choice-making. Theorists have stressed that one element vital to effective language planning is some form of evaluation research. Through evaluations, policy makers can determine whether existing language policies are effective, or whether experimental programs should become the basis for new policy.

Despite the recommendations of academic analysts, however, evaluation studies often receive little attention in Third World language planning (Das Gupta, 1976; Neustupny, 1968; Rubin, 1977). Until recently, few evaluations of language policies had been conducted, and even now that more researchers

have begun to conduct such studies, there is little evidence that their findings have influenced educational language planning (Tucker & Cziko, 1978).

Why have evaluation studies carried so little import in determining educational language policy? This writer attempted to address that question in a study reviewing and analyzing published MTMI evaluations in the Third World (Delpit, 1982). One of the answers that emerged was the problem of the limited scope of most of those evaluations. Given the extensive list of reasons for advocacy and opposition to the use of MTMI in Third World schools, it is only reasonable that the more information regarding these issues to which policy makers have access, the more able they will be to assess the many factors involved in determining language policy. In fact, however, the vast majority of MTMI evaluations conducted have attempted to judge the effects of MTMI programs only in terms of the academic achievement -- typically ascertained by standardized achievement test scores -- of the children involved. (See Engle, 1975; Macmillan, 1980; Thevenin, 1980; and Dutcher, 1981 for a review of research studies conducted on mother tongue programs.)

Scholars in the field of bilingual education have identified variables other than achievement test scores which should be monitored in order to assess MTMI programs, including religio-cultural, economic, and political factors (Spolsky et al., 1974; Spolsky, 1978); quality of available teachers and teaching materials in the language of instruction (Macmillan, 1980); locus of program control (Paulston, 1980); language demography and linguistic attitudes of the surrounding community (Hymes, 1980); patterns of language use within the classroom (Erickson, 1977); the implicit and explicit goals held by various program participants (Mackey, 1977; Spolsky, 1978); and the cultural context of learning in the community (Engle, 1975). These factors are not systematically studied in most of the evaluations thus far conducted. Yet,

given the many varied reasons for advocacy or opposition, MTMI cannot be proved to be either a valid investment or a waste of resources unless such matters are considered.

In short, evaluation studies which are limited to the study of classroom variables can seldom provide sufficient information for making choices about language in education. As the UNESCO scholars pointed out two decades ago:

> The implication is that educationists and administrators, however well-armed with theory and guiding principles, will always have to study the complex of historical, geographical, sociological, political, religious, cultural and linguistic factors peculiar to a given community before attempting to formulate a suitable language policy in education (UNESCO, 1953:76).

The present study attempts to present the data collected during the research period in such a way as to inform some of the issues discussed above.

ANALYTICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The methodology employed in the research drew upon two areas of inquiry: ethnographic investigation and qualitative evaluation research. Based on both a review of the scholarly literature and evidences of actual utilization by policy makers of evaluation results, the previously mentioned review of Third World MTMI evaluation studies concluded with several guidelines for structuring such evaluations:

1. In order to insure a valid interpretation of study results, the researcher should be either a native of the culture to be studied or a non-native who has gained familiarity with the culture through long-term, careful study and direct involvement.
2. Ideally, an evaluation would include elements from both the experimental/product[3] and the ethnographically-based/process[4] paradigms, but the paradigm chosen at any given point should be appropriate to the issue under study and to the stage of the program's development: The experimental/product paradigm can generate useful information when the program in question has had sufficient time to become operationally established, when it is known that the program is sufficiently consistent across sites that questions

---

[3]Related to product or outcome evaluation where the outcomes of a program are measured -- in education most often with scores from achievement tests.

[4]Related to process evaluation which "focuses on the internal dynamics and actual operations of a program in an attempt to understand its strengths and weaknesses...why certain things are happening, how the parts of the program fit together, and how people perceive the program" (Patton, 1978:165).

of general effects can reasonably be asked, when the participating children have received enough instruction within the program that experimental measurement of the program's effects is meaningful, and when the variables involved, both independent and dependent, can be specified with some reliability and agreement. When a program is not yet operationally established, when knowledge about program processes is desired, and when attitudinal issues related to both goals and effects need to be studied, the alternative ethnographically-based/process paradigm is more appropriate.

3. In order to provide the most useful data to policy makers, evaluations should include assessment of factors beyond those confined to the classroom. The success of a language policy is dependent upon more than educational factors and can be measured by determinants other than school achievement and language skills (Delpit, 1982:61).

Particularly because the researcher was not a native of the community under study in the research described here, an approach was needed that would facilitate learning as much about the new culture as possible, one that would therefore demand participant-observation. This would, it was hoped, promote both the understanding of some aspects of the culture, but more importantly, an understanding of how members of the community made sense of the program and their role in it.

Because the program was new, because information on program processes was desired, and because it was most important that the attitudes of the participants be assessed, formative rather than summative evaluation models seemed appropriate, and the ethnographically-based/process paradigm more useful.

Having made these preliminary decisions, it was then necessary to provide a more detailed methodological framework. Although little work has been done in combining ethnographic and evaluation methodologies to study bilingual educational programs, two theorists come closest to providing a what and a how for the study.

Dell Hymes (1980) has discussed a method of examining bilingual educational settings he refers to as "ethnographic monitoring": Through

interview and observation the researcher aims to recognize and understand patterns and meaning that may emerge during the course of the program; attempts to identify values of the many participants in the program (teachers, administrators, parents, children); describes how those values interact with the program's implementation; and strives to identify and analyze the effects and consequences of the program itself on those affected by it.

Bernard Spolsky and his associates (Spolsky et al., 1974; Spolsky, 1978) have developed perhaps the most comprehensive model to date for describing and evaluating bilingual programs. Spolsky attempts to map all of the relevant factors of a bilingual education program on a single integrated structure and explore some of the lines of interconnection. The structure is best pictured, he says, as a four-tiered wedding cake (Spolsky, 1978; see Figure 1 below). Around the circumference of each tier are placed factors that might have an influence on, or may be affected by, a specific bilingual program, grouped according to general category (linguistic, psychological, socioeconomic, political, religio-cultural, historical, demographic, and geographic). In the center of each circle are located educational factors -- not to designate their primacy, but rather to demonstrate their dependence on other factors. The first tier represents the situation of the community (village, state, nation) before a bilingual program, including the explicit and unstated goals of those who have planned and control or are affected by the program. The third tier represents the program as actually implemented. The fourth tier is similar to the first, but represents the situation in the community after the program has been in operation for some time.

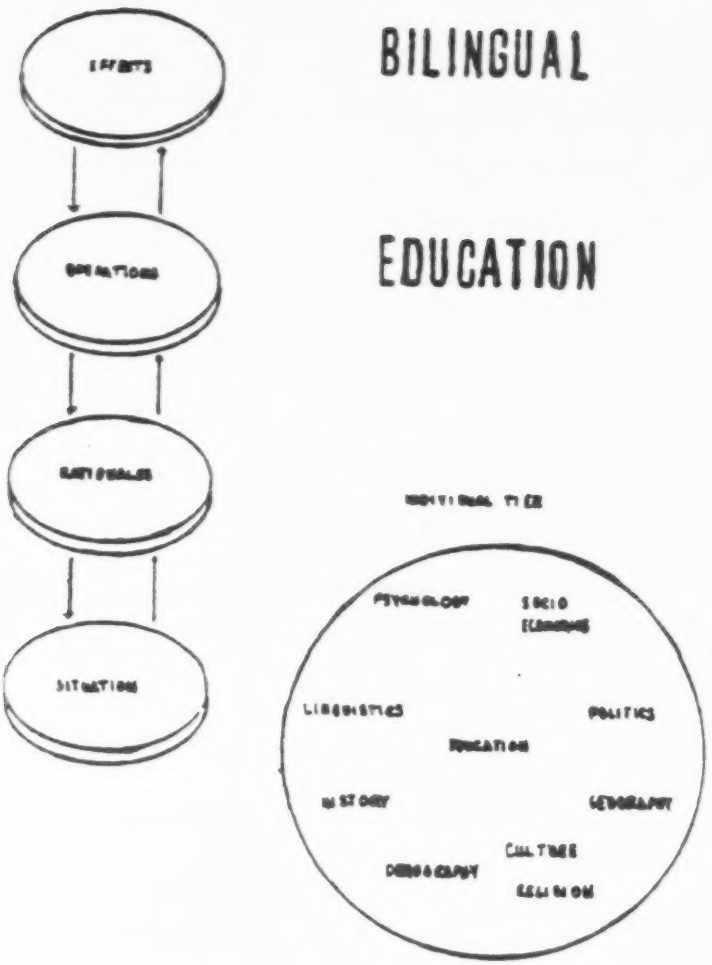


Figure 1. (Spolsky, 1978: 349)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using Spolsky's model on which factors should be studied and at what points in the program, and Hymes' model on how to go about that study, a research plan was devised to make use of four primary vehicles for data

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

collection -- interviews and surveys, [5] participant observation, [6] document study and analysis, [7] and some limited formal and informal testing.

These were used in three "locales," so to speak: the community, the classroom, and the administrative bases of the program. The research included approximately six months of village-based activity, three months in each of the two linguistic areas where the program was then in operation. During this period the researcher lived in villages, conducted interviews and general participant-observation of the communities in question, and made observations of the VTPS and community schools in the area. Extensive observation was conducted in two schools in each area, with day long visits to as many of the others as possible. The remainder of the field-based research was conducted in Arawa/Kieta, the provincial headquarters, where it was possible to study documents, attend relevant meetings, and interview town-based administrators, political figures, and other relevant individuals, and in Tinputz, where the VTPS teacher training center was located.

The research included approximately 90 formal and informal interviews and/or group discussions: 23 with community leaders; 19 with parents; 25 with VTPS teachers; 16 with community school personnel; 9 with political figures; and about 6 others. Sixty-seven observations were made of VTPS classrooms, 11 of VTPS teacher training sessions, 8 of community school classrooms, and 3 of relevant, formal provincial-level meetings. Analysis of a number of relevant documents and achievement testing in three school were also a part of the

---

[5]Procedures for interview and surveys were drawn from a number of writings including Bogdan and Taylor (1975), Brady (1976), Lofland (1971), and Schatzman and Strauss (1974).

[6]Methods employed in participant-observation strategies were influenced by Bogdan and Taylor (1975), Erickson (1977), McCall and Simmons (1969), Mehan (1981), Schatzman and Strauss (1974), and Webb et al. (1981).

[7]Procedures drawn from Glaser and Strauss (1967), Murphy (1980), and Webb et al. (1981).

finalized design. The following sections describe some of the results of the research.

ETHNOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITIES

Separated from one another by only a shallow, half-mile strait, the islands of Bougainville and Buka form a single, lushly foliated land mass that, along with a number of outlying atolls, comprises the North Solomons Province. Located some 600 miles from Port Moresby, the nation's capital, the about 150 miles long and about 39 miles across at its widest point. About half the land area is very hilly or mountainous, and numerous rivers wind throughout. The climate is tropical, usually ranging between 80 and 90 degrees throughout the year, with a very high annual rainfall.

The people of Bougainville-Buka can be identified by their extremely black skin which racially distinguishes them from the lighter-skinned mainland Papua New Guineans whom the former refer to as "redskins." Presently the populatiom of the province numbers about 130,000, with about 82% of the population residing outside of the major urban areas of Arawa/Kieta and Panguna in rural, traditional villages.

The province is one of the richest in the country as a result of revenues from the large Bougainville Copper Mine at Panguna. The mine brought both wealth and independence to the province, along with a considerable amount of social unrest and the difficulties inherent in the institution of a large-scale expatriate operated enterprise in a traditional rural setting.

Educationally the North Solomons is one of the most advanced areas of the country. The province places second on the list of provinces ranked by enrollment ratio, promotion rate, participation rate of girls, and enrollment growth (Anderson, 1981). Still, about two-thirds of the province's children complete formal schooling at grade six when qualifying examinations are given

to determine promotion. The province also has the distinction of being the first to make substantial use of educational decision-making prowers it acquired through decentralization.

The indigenous people of the province are culturally and linguistically diverse. There are 21 different languages in the province, both Austronesian and non-Austronesian, further divided into some 46 sub-languages and dialects. See Appendix A for a language map of the area. The language areas are not equally divided by number of speakers. In fact, the three most populous language groups, Halia (Buka), Telei (Buin), and Nasioi, account for about 50% of the population, and the seven largest language groups for 82% (Allen & Hurd, 1963).

A few old men remember some German or Japanese expressions from the early German colonial period or from the Japanese occupation during the war, and a few of the younger men return from other areas of the country with some knowledge of other indigenous languges, but English and Tok Pisin are the only languages not indigenous to the province that are in daily use. Most residents have gained whatever knowledge they have of English from schooling, although outside of the urban areas this language is rarely spoken. Tok Pisin is known and spoken generally throughout the province, except by older people, women, and young children who are less likely to speak it (Allen & Hurd, 1963).

There is some amount of distrust between inhabitants of different areas of the province, but recently this has been overshadowed by an even greater dislike of outiders -- the "ex-pats", and most vehemently, the "redskins", most of whom have arrived in connection with the workings of the copper mine or copra plantations.

Buka and Buin, the two regions of the North Solomons Province where the

VTPS scheme has thus far been initiated, are similar in their rural village lifestyles. The people's mainstay is subsistence agriculture, but recently added cash crops provide money for school fees and participation in the modern sector economy. Each area has its own form of traditional leadership that co-exists with the modern system of "community governments" set into place shortly after independence. There is also a system of village courts which is supposed to handle local level disagreements according to some not fully articulated blend of modern and traditional law.

The people of the Buka and Buin regions are also similar in their attitudes toward language. They beleive it is important that children know their tok ples and learn to read and write it so that they can get along well in their villages, share knowledge with other village members articulately, participate adequately in the village court system where oral language ability is important, write letters to friends and relatives if they leave the village, and write about the community's cultural traditions in tok ples books. One community member in Buin believed that learning to read and write in their own languge would allow children to become better thinkers, to "work out things in an intelligent, clever way as wise people do." Another Buka parent, a former teacher, believed that children should learn to read and write in tok ples because as things presently stood many children completed community school without having gained literacy in English. If they learned to read and write in tok ples, at least they'd be literate in some langugae.

Most people believe English to be less important as a spoken language than as a literate language for village life. Many said that for children who remained in the villages the ability to speak English was of little value, except when English-speaking foreigners might visit. It became important only for those young people who would leave the village for studies or to seek

employment. On the other hand, the ability to read and write English could be of great value in the village -- to get new information from books, newspapers, and magazines, and especially to engage in business activities such as learning how to set up a tradestore, ordering goods, and keeping inventory.

Attitudes toward Tok Pisin are mixed. It is frequently discussed almost as a necessary evil among village dwellers. On the one hand the language is seen as valuable and necessary to communicate with countrymen from other language areas, and as such is a unifying force for the nation. It is also useful as a means of getting news from other areas through Radio North Solomons. Still, village people often see Tok Pisin as less precise than either tok ples or English, and hence a less useful language than either. "It's not a real language. You just can't say what you want to in Tok Pisin," was a frequent complaint. The Tok Pisin used in rural areas is indeed less developed, with fewer lexical items than that used in urban centers, so the complaint may be justified.

People in general do not want Tok Pisin to be taught in the schools. "They learn it anyway, so why bother," was the comment most frequently made. Some added that if children learned to read and write in tok ples, they would automatically gain literacy skills in Tok Pisin (this was born out by the testing conducted in Buin and Buka by this researcher). The most damning attitude toward Tok Pisin, however, was the widely held belief that the prevalence of Tok Pisin was destroying the local tok ples. The Board of Management of a Buin school made the strongest statement: "Pidgin is not our language. The children learned Pidgin and they forgot out traditions."

There is a strong sense of community in the villages of Buin and Buka, and, except for stricter sex-segregated activities, many of the organized

social events would seem hardly out of place in a tightly knit suburban community in the United States. There are men's soccer and rugby teams and women's basketball and volleyball teams which compete with teams from neighboring villages every Sunday. Every Thursday in one village is Community Day, when all able-bodied people are to report to a central location where they are assigned tasks determined by elected committee leaders -- building a cupboard for one of the teachers, cutting the grass around the school, making a new sago-leaf roof for a family whose house was damaged by a storm. Many people are active in the Catholic Church, both in attending services and participating in parish social activities.

Yet despite these introduced activities which so liken the villages to peaceful suburbs, there are dramatic differences. Beneath their surface appearance, the villages are deeply steeped in their own traditions: garden crops are encouraged to produce abundantly with age-old charms; tuna fishing boats are carried in a strictly specified manner and blessed with elaborate and secret ceremonies and sacrifices before setting out to sea; extensive rituals for deaths, births, marriages, the building of men's custom houses, and other major events are conducted with great care and proper attention to tradition; and traditional leaders maintain an important role in village affairs.

These rites of the past coexist with the rites of the modern era as the community goes about its everyday living. But there are other areas of existence where there appears to be a synthesis of the old ways and the new. In the area of health, for example, people appear to trust the <u>combined</u> effects of the local Western-styled clinic with its injections and tablets, and the highly respected skills of the traditional healer who works through secret charms, rituals, and local plants. In sport, some young men utilize

traditional "magic" in addition to daily practice sessions to ensure winning a rugby game.

It is within this culturally integrated context that North Solomons people during the 1979 research made it perfectly clear to the investigators that what they wanted for their children was an education which prepared them to live within two cultural worlds. They wanted an education appropriate for those children who would stay in the village, for those who would go away and soon return, and for those who would spend most of their lives in towns and cities. They wanted a strong basis of "what was good from the old" so as to have children feel the security of a cultural base, and the "best of the new" so as to allow them to enter the changing world of towns and technology. But most of all they seemed to want the privilege of making those all important selections themselves.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VTPS PROGRAM

The Viles Tok Ples Skul, as agreed upon by provincial planners, should be a place where children learn to read, write, and count in their mother tongue. At the same time they should receive a basic cultural education in the customs, values, and acceptable behavior of their community, and should, as well, be prepared in the Western sense of pre-schooling for their primary education. The program today attempts to follow that mandate.

The teachers in the VTPS schools, usually two to a school, are mainly young village men and women who have completed six years of elementary education, a few with a further two or three years of high school. Teachers are assisted by a language area supervisor and paid a minimum acceptable salary for village-level employment. They are chosen by their villages as best representing the values of that village, and have received short course

training at the VTPS Training Center. The preparation for Year One of the program lasts six weeks, followed by inservice training, and a further short course for Year Two teaching occurs twelve months later.

Initial training is broken into three weeks of literacy work and three weeks of learning to organize a class and work with young children. There is also preparation for teaching elements of traditional counting and mathematics, nature study, and science, as well as cultural studies and story telling. Teachers are encouraged to use natural materials from their local environments such as shells, stones, coconuts, leaves, and flowers, and to teach through songs, dances, play activities, and drama.

There is no doubt, however, that language and literacy is central to the tok ples school curriculum -- as a means to talk about, understand, and reflect on the world around the child. A weekly program has been prepared for teachers, and there are pre-reading books and primers with accompanying teachers' guides for each language. Primers are based on the "Sarah Gudschinsky" method pioneered by the Summer Institute for Linguistics, an analytic-phonic method of teaching, with new sounds introduced through key words from which syllables are extracted.

Children begin VTPS schooling at age seven and continue until age nine, delaying their entry into regular English-medium primary school for two years. The 8:00 to 12:00 daily VTPS schedule allows both the teachers and the children to participate in most community activities, so it is not unusual to find VTPS children, teachers, and parents all working together in the gardens in the afternoons. One of the positive effects of this situation is that there is a natural flow from the community into the classroom and vice versa, which helps to eliminate the potential barriers of communication between teachers and parents and which allows community events to easily become a part

of classroom lessons.

EVALUATION IN LIGHT OF THE PROGRAM'S GOALS

In order to evaluate a program such as VTPS at such an early stage in its development, it is necessary to determine what effects the program has thus far generated, compare these to program goals, and try, based on available information, to speculate on future trends. The goals developed in 1979 by the program initiators list three areas of expected benefit:

> a. An <u>educational</u> benefit, by letting children start literacy in their mother tongue with which they are already familiar before proceeding to learn English, a second language. They would also gain other pre-school skills which would prepare them to do well in community school.
>
> b. A <u>social</u> benefit, by giving them a basis of knowledge, skills, and values which would prepare them for participation in the life of their community after leaving school, and would enable them to complete community schooling later when they were more physically and mentally mature and ready to take part in community projects. It would also make their socialization into school easier by starting their formal education in their own language. This could give their education more meaning for their parents as well as themselves.
>
> c. A <u>cultural</u> benefit, by allowing children to receive the foundations of their education in the language, culture, and custom of their community and encouraging their <u>tok ples</u> to have equal status with the English language in their minds so that they are proud of it (Kovoho, 1981).

Educational Benefits

The stated educational goals of VTPS assume benefits for the child both during his or her tenure in VTPS, and later on when the child has reached community school. At the time the research was conducted it was too early to attempt to measure the relative success of VTPS-educated children over those who did not have the benefit of VTPS, so other measures were attempted.

Grade 1 Teacher Assessment

In all three cases in which VTPS children had entered Grade 1, the Grade 1 teachers interviewed expressed their belief in the superiority of those

children over children they had taught previously who had not had VTPS training. The areas of superiority mentioned by the three teachers were surprisingly consistent. They all claimed these children were

- more confident in speaking out in class
- better readers of English
- quicker to understand and follow the teacher's directions
- better at handwriting skills
- more alert
- better behaved

In two of the classes the children were much beyond the expected primer level. In one, the teacher had moved into Grade 2 reading books, in the other, where Grade 2 books were not available, the teacher had completed the highest level of supplementary series, a series she said was much more difficult than the series ordinarily used in Grade 1 (a look at the books verified her assessment). In the third classroom, the teacher insisted that the children were more advanced, but this did not bear itself out in the children's performance to the same degree as in the other classrooms. The community school inspector commented that this particular Grade 1 teacher was older, seldom used English in the classroom (verified by observation), had difficulty in controlling the class, and, in essence, was probably holding the children back.

In an observation of one of the Grade 1 classes, the children showed an understanding of spoken English far superior to that observed in the average first grade. In one lesson the teacher asked the children a series of riddles that required both a knowledge of English spelling and of English vocabulary, for example, "My first letter is m, my last is n. I am very big. Trees and grass grow on top of me. What am I?" [mountain]. Most children seemed to

understand the spoken English, as their errors were on the side of meaning, as opposed to simply guessing from the phonic clues (for example, kau kau for watermelon and kundu — a special kind of local drum -- for drum).

These observations and teacher interviews tend to support the notion that VTPS-trained children are more likely to be successful in Grade 1 than are those without VTPS training. However, children who have attended VTPS are, on average, two years older than non-VTPS children, an age difference which could explain their superior skill. This was pointed out to the teachers. One responded that these children outperformed a third grade of similar age she had taught the year before, and another said that she had children in Grade 1 who were the same age as the others, but who had not attended VTPS. One of these had transferred from another area, one just did not attend VTPS for unknown reasons, and a third began VTPS but dropped out in Year 1 and did not continue. These, she said, lagged considerably behind the others at mid-year and were struggling so much that the teacher had been trying to convince their parents that the children should, even at that late age, first attend VTPS before again trying Grade 1.

This anecdotal evidence supports the view of a community school advantage for VTPS children, but clearly does not prove it. That proof will need to await a greater number of children continuing on to community school, as well as formal comparative testing of English competence beginning no earlier than the end of Grade 2 or Grade 3.

Formal Comparative Research

Professor John Downing of the University of Victoria, Canada visited the North Solomons in October and November of 1982, when he conducted research in three language areas of the province to study the "metacognitive readiness for literacy learning" of children who attended VTPS and same-age children who

went directly to Grade 1 (Downing & Downing, 1983). The tests administered involved no reading, per se, but measured metacognitive language skills, using the LARR (Linguistic Awareness and Reading Readiness) test and tests of phonemic segmentation ability, found to be highly predictive of later reading ability.

His findings show a significant superiority of VTPS mother-tongue-educated children over children in the same language areas who received all of their schooling in English. This result confirmed his hypothesis that children can learn the basic skills necessary for reading much more readily when the material of initial instruction is in the children's mother tongue. Downing suggests that this might explain the consistent finding around the world that children who begin literacy-learning in their native language are later able to perform much better in reading a foreign language than children who receive all of their schooling in the foreign language. It is widely accepted that children only learn to read once, and that later literacy in other languages involves not re-learning the reading skill, but transferring already acquired literacy knowledge to the second language. Therefore, if a child learns to read in a language which promotes successful learning of literacy skills, he or she can be expected to be more effective in transferring those skills to any language learned subsequently.

Downing's additional research findings in the Highlands support the hypothesis that learning initial literacy skills in English is not efficient literacy training for Papua New Guinean children. He found, as expected, that children who had had no schooling, and consequently no literacy training, scored lower than children who attended VTPS. However, he also found that children who had never attended school scored higher on most measures than children who had attended community school, and received literacy training

only in English. This finding leads Downing to speculate that the cognitive confusion of attempting to gain initial literacy skills in a foreign language is so great as to retard children's metacognitive development to a level below that of children who have never attended school. If that is so, the research results provide a powerful statement in favor of teaching initial literacy skills in the mother tongue and not in English.

Achievement Testing

Another method of assessing the educational aspect of VTPS is to determine if the children are able to perform after two years of VTPS schooling at the level expected of them by the program planners. To get some idea of literacy achievement, this researcher conducted tests in three schools -- two in Buin and one in Buka -- at the end of the 1982 school year. Nine children were chosen from the Year 2 class of each school. Each group was identified by choosing every fifth name on the roll.[8] That process meted a mixed sample in each case with representatives from groups identified by the teachers as top, middle, and low-achievers.

The basic test consisted of a reading passage taken from a primer which the children had already completed sometime previously. This was scored for time, errors, and comprehension (three points if the reading time was under the mean time for that group, one point for each word read correctly, one point for each of three comprehension questions answered correctly). In the second part of the test, children were asked to write a sentence from dictation. They received one point for each correct letter, one point for writing their name correctly, and one point for each correct capital letter and punctuation mark.

---

[8]In Buka, because schools closed early due to a prolonged draught, children were chosen from those still available for testing.

Other sections of the test were added in different schools. In the two Buin schools a section was included which tested the children's ability to read and comprehend a passage that they had not seen before. This passage was taken from a story written by one Year 2 VTPS child who was not tested and was much more difficult than the primers. Again, one point was awarded for each word read correctly and one point for each of three correctly answered comprehension questions. A final section was conducted at one Buin school and the Buka school. This section tested the children's ability to read a passage written in Tok Pisin, a language that few if any of the children understood. This section was included to ascertain how well the children's training in tok ples would assist them in decoding another phonetically regular, though unknown, language.

The results of the testing showed that most children in each school were able to read the material presented without difficulty. In two schools, there was one child who had no idea of the reading process and one child with only minimal understanding. Table I represents the basic test scores. (A chart indicating all test results can be found in Appendix B.)

Buka	Buin 1	Buin 2
100%	100%	100%
99	99	99
97	99	96
95	97	91
92	94	89
91	92	87
85	92	76
76	80	16
Ø	62	Ø
Average: 82%	90.5%	73%
Average: 92% (Excluding Ø scores)		82%

Table I. Basic Achievement Test Scores

The results of these tests indicate that most children in the second year of VTPS who were tested have learned to read and comprehend the phonemes of their tok ples which they have been taught, that they are able to write and spell their own language with few errors, that most are able to read and comprehend material not previously taught, and that most are able to transfer their knowledge of reading in tok ples to decoding Tok Pisin with little difficulty.

Social Benefits

This is perhaps the hardest area to evaluate, depending as it does on the measurement of elusive attitudinal factors, as well as on determining the long-term effects of the program on the kind of people children become once they have completed all of their schooling. It is impossible to know now whether having participated in VTPS and terminating community school two years later will develop young people who are better integrated and more satisfied members of their communities. Perhaps the best means to attempt the task is to separate the general goal into the sub-goals and discuss the relevant data thus far available.

VTPS Will Give Children Knowledge, Skills, and Values to Prepare Them for Participation in Village Life

What can be said at this early stage of VTPS is that, based on interview data, many parents and teachers already perceive children to be participating more successfully within village life. Some parents claim that children are better behaved, more willing to help in chores around the house, and more knowledgeable about and interested in traditional ceremonies than were their older children who did not attend VTPS.

Pertinent to this question were the observations, formal interviews, and casual conversations with parents -- especially mothers in Buin -- which

revealed some attitudes different from Western ideas about school entry age. Most parents who attended school did not begin until age nine or ten at the earliest. The parents questioned, especially those in Buin, expressed concern that children of seven years of age are still too young for school. "Their heads aren't strong enough," was the most frequent comment. This perception of many parents possibly accounts for much of the absenteeism and/or drop-out from Grade 1. It certainly was agreed among many VTPS parents to be the reason for much of the absenteeism in Year 1 of VTPS. The major difference, however, is that at this time VTPS is something of a buffer zone. There is more freedom in dropping out for a year and returning the next (apparently not uncommon). In Grade 1, however, when a child drops out or is frequently absent, that usually means the end of his or her schooling; because of provincial rulings there is no returning.

The effect of the later community school exit age on high schools is a moot issue. The drop-out rate in high school is very high, creating a situation in which many resources are wasted. Conversations with Grade 7 leavers in the villages reveal that many left high school because they were homesick and missed the support of family and friends. This could be assumed to be a result of a general lack of maturity, and it could be argued that a later entry age would make the transition to high school just that much easier.

<u>VTPS Will Make Education More Meaningful for Children and Parents</u>

Again it is most difficult to decide how one might measure "meaningfulness" for either parents or children. The measures considered below -- parental and child attitudes determined by observation and interview, observed parent involvement, and child absentee and drop-out rates -- can only begin to access the social significance of the VTPS program to parents and

children.

Parental and Child Attitudes

Parents consistently praised VTPS, often quite eloquently. Many talked about the educational benefits VTPS provided, but most stressed the social implications of the scheme. Two statements, both made at Parents and Citizens meetings, summarize the tenor of parental comments:

> I may not know too much but I'd like to speak. Why do we educate children? Is it for the development of the country? But what is development? If we only educate a child so that he learns things to help him make money, he may be educated, but he is not a real man. If he comes back to his place and only brings money and a knowledge of making new money, and that's all he's interested in, then he's only half a man. But if a man brings a dedication to help his community, then no matter how much money he has, he is a whole man. And that is development. This tok ples school is the other side of education. Not the side that shows a person how to make money, but the side that makes a child learn about and love the community he is a part of. With the tok ples school, we can educate a child to be a whole man.
>
> -- Parent
> Hakets Village Tok Ples School
> Buka, NSP

> When children go to school, they go to an alien place. They leave their parents, they leave their gardens, they leave their homes, they leave everything that is their way of life. They sit in a classroom and they learn things that have nothing to do with their own place. Later, because they have only learned other things, they reject their own. They don't want to dig kau kau, they say it's dirty; they don't want to help their mothers fetch water. They look down on these things. There are big changes in children now. They don't obey their parents; they become rascals. And this is because they have gone to school and left the things that our ours.
>
> Now my child, he is in tok ples school. He is not leaving his place. He is learning in school about his customs, about his way of life. Now, he can write anything he wants to in tok ples. Not just things he can see, but things he thinks about, too. And he writes about his place: He writes about helping his mother carry water, about digging kau kau, about going to the garden. When he writes these things they become important to him. He is not only reading and writing about things outside, but learning through reading and writing to be proud of our way of life. When he is big,

he will not reject us. It is important to teach our children to read and write, but it is more important to teach them to be proud of themselves -- and of us.

-- Parent
Laitaro Village Tok Ples School
Buin, NSP
(Quoted in Delpit, in press)

These and other such statements express a strong feeling on the part of many parents and community members that academic education is fine, but what really concerns them is social and moral education -- the education that schools youngsters to become good people, who care about, participate in, and are proud of their communities. They see VTPS as a means to provide that kind of education.

As to the meaningfulness of VTPS to children, parents report that their VTPS children discuss at home more about what happens in the classroom than do their children educated only in community school. Reportedly, VTPS children also share their knowledge with older and younger siblings by teaching them how to write tok ples words, usually sitting down in the evenings and writing on the ground with a stick. The interest of older children is obvious, for in several of the schools visited, the VTPS classrooms were frequented by older community school children at recess times when the younger ones helped the older ones read tok ples primer lessons written on the blackboards. It is not easily measured, but the interest VTPS children show in sharing their knowledge and their opportunity to act as teachers to older children are probably evidence that the VTPS children find their schooling "meaningful."

In addition, observations within the VTPS classrooms reveal greater child involvement than in the non-VTPS community school classrooms. This finding is not surprising in that children are better able to participate in class discussions when the medium is a language they fully comprehend. This, too, likely influences children's feelings about schooling in a positive direction.

Absentee and Drop-Out Rate

A more objective measure of child and parent interest in VTPS -- absentee and drop-out rate -- cannot present a very clear picture at this time. In 1981, the drop-out rate for VTPS was 3.3%, and for Grade 1, 3.7%. This comparison appears to suggest little difference in attrition rates between the two systems, however, there are significant differences within the systems themselves. Although there is variation, most of the children in Grade 1 of community school are close to the seven-year-old entry age. However, in 1981 children in VTPS initially spanned an unbelievably wide age spectrum. Because there was such parental interest in the school, many children who were well over-age, but had never attended community school, appeared in the VTPS classrooms. Many such students were allowed to enroll, as it was correctly assumed that most would drop out of their own accord. This, coupled with the fact that younger VTPS children appear to drop out and then return the next year to begin the program again -- an option not available to Grade 1 students -- makes the comparison of these drop-out figures highly suspect.

There is a greater difference in comparing the attendance rates of the two institutions in the same community. The figures in Table II represent the attendance rates of three of the four schools studied in depth (figures for the fourth were not available). In all cases the VTPS attendance rate is higher than that of the community school located in the same village. These figures must again be viewed with some caution, however, for they compare VTPS children who are seven and eight years old with community school children in third to sixth grades. Too, the figures may be incomplete as many VTPS teachers did not always send in administrative forms on time. Still, the figures do support the statement frequently made by community school headmasters that VTPS maintains a lower absentee rate than the community schools.

	VTPS	comm. school	% difference
Ipirai (Buin)	85.3%	77.1%	8.2%
Laitaro (Buin)	81.4%	80.1%	1.3%
Hanahan (Buka)	90.9%	85.8%	5.1%

Table II. Comparison of VTPS and Community School Attendance Rates

Other Social Benefits

One additional social benefit has not been to children or to parents, but to the VTPS teachers. Providing useful and important work in the village for young school leavers is significant in fostering village cohesiveness. Some young people, bored and restless after leaving school, have become involved in various kinds of community disturbances which led community leaders to express their concern publically over the directions that society was taking in 1978-79. The VTPS teachers in each community are not only themselves engaged in meaningful work, but in many instances also provide a useful role model for other young people. In the words of a young woman teacher at Hanahan, "The young men used to tease me, but now they come around and help out."

Cultural Benefits

That most North Solomons people see their language as a vital part of their culture cannot be questioned. This sentiment, reiterated by individuals throughout the province was expressed eloquently by Raphael Kora, a previous headmaster of Hanahan Community School in Buka:

> When I think about my education I know that there was a very big gap. We were taught English and so we were molded to go outside, to

> leave our villages and go to cities to find jobs. No one taught us about our own language, our own place. They trained us to leave, not to stay. Australian and American children are taught English for many years, not just so they can learn the language but so they can learn their history, their values, their culture. We must train our children in the history, values, and culture of our people, too. And we must use our language to teach them, for language is culture. If we truly understand our language, we can say that we truly understand our culture. Our language tells us our relationship to everything: to the elders, to our parents, even to the sand, the rocks, the sea, and the stars. If my children are divorced from my own language, then I cannot teach them, and then, my children will reject both my culture and me. (Quoted in Delpit & Kemelfield, 1982)

Language, then, is seen as an integral part of cultural identity. It is also frequently spoken of as needing to be "saved" from English and Tok Pisin influences, with regret expressed that people nowadays mix languages and that they substitute English or Tok Pisin terms for already existing Telei or Halia terms. The children in tok ples school are learning the original Halia and Telei words instead of English-influenced replacements. Indeed, the difference is so marked that several younger parents in Buin who were able to read tok ples found it difficult to understand the children's writing because they used words and phrases "from before." Adults are very happy with this development and frequently exclaim when shown stories their children have written, "This is really our tok ples!"

The aspect of the program that attempts to teach specific cultural studies has proved less successful for several reasons. First, most VTPS teachers are quite young, and having themselves experienced only Western schooling, frequently do not know very much about their own cultural heritage. They are therefore understandably at a disadvantage in trying to teach it. This difficulty was anticipated by program planners, who expected older members of the communities to become "culture teachers" for the VTPS children. These individuals, however, expected some financial remuneration and ceased coming when none was forthcoming. Most teachers were at a loss to know what

to teach. Some enterprising teachers took it upon themselves to talk to older people in the evenings to unearth as much teachable material as possible, and others brought tape recorders into the villages to record stories and songs which they later played in the classrooms. Many, however, seemed to abandon most efforts to teach the subject.

The complaint that any requests for community assistance in teaching culture and customs is usually met with counter requests for financial remuneration is not a sign of non-commitment to the scheme as it might first appear. Traditionally, any cultural knowledge shared by knowledge-holders must be paid for. In the past this included the payment of pigs, shell money or foodstuffs to those in charge of initiation instruction or to those who take on apprentices for training in specific roles. Refusal to pay would represent a devaluation of the knowledge sought. In modern times with the transition to a cash economy it is reasonable to expect remuneration in cash instead of more traditional payment. During the research period conversations held with some elders led this researcher to the conclusion that payment was frequently viewed as more of a symbolic gesture than a request for large sums of money.

In a recent meeting in Buka, part of the present research, several village bigmen expressed concern at the limited time available for VTPS and the limited nature of the cultural studies within it. They suggested that more of the cultural history of the region should be recovered and recorded in printed form in the Halia language. This, they said, could be used by older children once they entered community school and would thus continue their cultural education. They believed that such a "culture book" must be created while they, the elders, are still alive and can guarantee its authenticity. Even here there are complications, however, for much traditional knowledge is

secret and cannot be passed on to an entire community.

Cultural Influences of VTPS Outside the Classroom

The Halia area Supervisor has made inroads into rediscovering aspects of traditional mathematics through long discussions with many village elders. His discoveries have created excitement amongst some Halia speaking community school teachers who have begun to incorporate some aspects of traditional mathematics into their teaching of Western mathematics.

Again in Buka, VTPS appears also to have encouraged the production of materials written in Halia. The Halia Tok Ples Committee has been working on developing bilingual materials for use in VTPS and in local community schools.

Summary

Educationally, Grade 1 teachers assess VTPS children as being generally superior to those children who have not had the benefit of VTPS. Second, tests conducted by Professor John Downing show a superiority in metacognitive readiness for literacy learning (a skill linked to later reading ability) for VTPS children as compared to the same age Grade 1 children. Third, approximately 90% of those children tested showed the ability to read and write in their language as well as the ability to read Tok Pisin.

Socially, parents perceive children to be participating more successfully in village life as a result of VTPS. The long-term effect of VTPS, to what extent it is able to rectify problems community members identified in the 1979 survey, is no doubt the true measure of the program's success, but must await the assessment of community members themselves, including those adults who were originally VTPS children, in the context of a dynamically changing society.

The effect of the two year delay in entry to and exit from community school is yet to be seen. Parents questioned almost universally believe seven

years is too young an age for children to begin community school and are much happier with the age nine entry. Communities believe that a later exit age may forestall several social problems which 12-13 year-old school leavers face, along with the 2-3 year gap before being able to enter vocational training. As for thos who continue into high school, interviews indicate that an older entry age may lower Grade 7 drop-outs due to immaturity, although further research into the cause of drop-outs is warranted.

As to whether VTPS schooling is more meaningful to children and parents, what can be said now is that children seem to enjoy these schools and actively participate in all activities. Parents speak highly of the school, indicate strong support for their continued existence, and although they seldom become involved in classroom activities, seem to observe VTPS classrooms and talk to VTPS teachers more frequently than they visit community schools or talk to community school teachers. Social benefits to VTPS teachers have also been noted: Many Grade 6 leavers are given meaningful and important work in the village as a result of the program.

Culturally, in response to parental and local community wishes articulated during the 1979 research, children are indeed receiving the foundations of their education in their own culture and language. Adult community members express satisfaction with the idea, although they wish to see more cultural elements included in the program. There have also been effects of VTPS beyond the VTPS classroom -- some community school teachers have become interested in newly rediscovered traditional conceptual systems, which they are incorporating into their more Western-based subjects. This trend, should it continue, suggests that the VTPS cultural emphasis could extend throughout primary schooling. Additionally, VTPS has helped stimulate the spread of a standardized form of the various indigenous languages in which

the schools are working, as well as the production of literature in those languages. Although the teaching of specific cultural studies is at the moment weak, steps are being taken to address that weakness.

VTPS IN WIDER PERSPECTIVE

The Viles Tok Ples Skul scheme is unquestionably alive and well. It is achieving mostof its immediate aims and shows promise of meeting long-range goals. The program planners and the people who are affected by the scheme are by and large happy with the results. Despite, however, the evidences of the value of VTPS and the gains it has thus far achieved in the eyes of those involved in the program, the scheme continues to be affected by numerous constraints. It is a monumental task to provide materials and programs in the 21 different languages of the province, most with no written orthographies or with histories that make standardization difficult to effect, and furthermore to do so with limited resources and within a constricting economy with lowered world copper prices.

The teaching force itself has inherent problems. Young, inexperienced teachers, whose only contact with schooling has been their own English-medium instruction in Western-oriented primary schools must struggle with teaching in a style so different from their own previous learning experiences, while at the same time managing an instructional program with little training, few supplies, limited materials, and little supervision.

The ideal underlying much of the thinking behind VTPS -- empowering local communities to effect change in their own localities -- also brings with it a sub-set of dilemmas: The more decentralized the program becomes the less assurance there is of the administrative competence needed to run it. Then too, community attitudes formed by previous experience with school agencies which took full control of decision-making and forbade all local input hinder

true community control of VTPS schooling and must be dealt with within each community setting to insure that the schools do become an integral part of community concerns and not merely another imposed government-run agency.

Aside from these more technical difficulties, the very purpose of the school -- as a linguistic and cultural valuer and transmitter -- is sometimes inhibited. The young, Western-educated teachers frequently know little about their own culture; the children are often too young at ages seven and eight to be presented with cultural knowledge traditionally transmitted to older youth; and two years is generally considered too short a time to pass on significant cultural instruction. Furthermore, the secret nature of much cultural knowledge limits what can be taught. As the Halia supervisor said about specific aspects of culture teaching, "We must ask the bigmen. If they say no, then we can't teach it."

But the role of the school is not only as a vehicle for transmitting traditional culture, but also a preparation for entering community school and learning the English language and Western ways. While this role is well-suited to the desire for a synthesis of the two cultures espoused by the people of the North Solomons, its actualization creates elements of conflict. The Western concept of school is not always in line with traditional forms of cultural behavior. It suggests identical roles for all students, limited only by their own abilities, whereas traditional ways define roles according to ancestry and sex. Just the presence of boys and girls together in a learning environment is contrary to most North Solomons cultures. The teacher's role also differs. Teachers are assumed in Western schools to be equally equipped to teach all students. Because of the traditionally role-bound aspects of traditional cultural knowledge, however, male teachers are at a loss to teach knowledge "owned" by females and vice versa. The teacher in the Western

school is also considered the authority, regardless of sex. Traditional cultural roles of young women in some areas of the province make their role as authority figure difficult to enforce.

In summary, despite its constraints, it is evident from the research presented herein that the Viles Tok Ples Skul scheme of the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea is a viable institution that has made considerable progress towards meeting its declared goals. But the stated goals of a program seldom encompass its true significance. Given its particular historical and socio-cultural context, what is the more fundamental significance of VTPS to Papua New Guinea or to other Third World multilingual nations?

The scheme is significant first in how it was conceived. VTPS shows that multilingual countries faced with the thorny problem of determining language choice in education could gain considerable insight in their decision-making by going directly to those served by the educational system. Certainly it can be (and often has been) argued that rural, uneducated community people lack the experience and training to make important policy decisions, but, as Lambert and Sidoti counter, and the people of the North Solomons demonstrate, it could just as convincingly be argued that "social groups usually gravitate toward good decisions on their own" (1979:36). Certainly parents and community members must be given access to data which can inform their decision-making, but once this is provided, their advice on their own aspirations, motivations, and expectations is invaluable in structuring workable learning environments for their children.

A second significance of the VTPS scheme in a newly emergent nation with limited resources and more than 700 different languages is that it exists at all. What made mother tongue education realizable in Papua New Guinea was

first, decentralization of educational policy-making and administrative powers, and second, the community enthusiasm for the scheme which inspired enough support that buildings, teachers, and other resources could be acquired at the local level. Certainly, were the backing of the people not behind the project, it could not have progressed as it has, an important lesson to those wishing to engage in educational reform.

The third significance of the scheme is that it demonstrates that acknowledging, even celebrating, the cultural differences of a nation need not be politically divisive. When people are assisted to maintain their sense of group identity, they are more, not less, likely to feel a part of the national body that supported their local aspirations.

The final significant aspect of the VTPS scheme to be discussed here is the resolution of the colonial language versus mother tongue debate. Neither language can be sacrificed for the sake of the other when there is an evident desire to create a synthesis between the old and the new, the familiar and the foreign. North Solomons people have striven to translate the modern world into their own reality, and incorporate their reality into the modern world. Joshua Fishman put it well: "The quest is for modernity . . . and authenticity, simultaneously, for seeing the world, but 'through our own eyes,' for going to the world, but 'in our own way' (1972:73; emphasis in original).

To conclude, the Viles Tok Ples Skul program has proven that, given the opportunity, a people has every desire and capacity to participate in the planning of its future. In choosing an educational alternative such as mother tongue medium instruction, communities are frequently choosing not only a curriculum innovation, but a way, in their estimation, to improve the quality of their lives. There is never a guarantee that a particular language policy

will "work," but when that policy is backed by the will of the people it is to affect, there is no better prospect for its success.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Afolayan, A. The Six-Year Primary Project in Nigeria. In A. Bamgbose (ed.), 1976.

Alatis, J. (ed.). Bilingualism and language contact: 21st annual roundtable of Georgetown University. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1970.

_____ (ed.). International dimensions of bilingual education: Roundtable on languages and linguistics, 1978. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1978.

Allen, J. and C. Hurd. Languages of the Bougainville district. Papua New Guinea: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1963.

Anderson, B. (ed.). The right to learn: The neglect of non-formal education. Port Moresby: Department of Education, University of Papua New Guinea, 1981.

Ansre, G. The use of indigenous languages in education in sub-Saharan Africa: Presuppositions, lessons, and targets. In J. Alatis (ed.), 1976.

Awoniyi, T. Mother tongue education in West Africa. In A. Bamgbose (ed.), 1976.

Benton, R.A. The flight of the amokura: Oceanic languages and formal education in the South Pacific. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1981.

_____. Problems and prospects for indigenous languages and bilingual education in New Zealand and Oceania. In B. Spolsky and R. Cooper (eds.), 1978.

Bogdan, R. and S. Taylor. Introduction to qualitative research methods: A phenomenological approach to the social sciences. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.

Brady, J. The craft of interviewing. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1976.

Bull, W.E. The use of vernacular languages in education. International Journal of Applied Linguistics, Vol. 21, 1955. (Reprinted in D. Hymes, ed., 1965).

Cheetham, B. Huli Children -- their education and their teachers. In P. Smith and G. Guthrie (eds.), 1980.

Das Gupta, J. Language diversity and national development. In J. Fishman, C. Ferguson, and J. Das Gupta (eds.), 1968.

Delpit, L. Language and culture: An evaluation of the North Solomons Viles Tok Ples Skuls. ERU Report, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, in press.

_____. Mother tongue medium instruction: Implications for evaluation in the Third World. Unpublished Special Qualifying Paper, Harvard University, 1982.

_____ and G. Kemelfield. Building on Melanesian foundations: Viles Tok Ples Skuls in the North Solomons. Paper presented at the Waigani Seminar: The Eight-Point Plan and National Goals Revised 1972-1982. University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby, September 8-11, 1982.

Downing, J. and M. Downing. Metacognitive readiness for literacy learning. Papua New Guinea Journal of Education, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1983.

Dutcher, N. The use of first and second languages in primary education: Selected case studies. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1981.

Engle, P.L. The use of vernacular languages in education: Language medium in early school years for minority language groups. Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975.

Erickson, F. Some approaches to inquiry in school-community ethnography. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1977.

Fishman, J.A. Language and nationalism: Two integrative essays. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, 1972.

_____, C. Ferguson, and J. Das Gupta (eds.). Language problems of developing nations. New York: Wiley, 1968.

Hansen, J.F. Sociocultural perspectives on human learning: An introduction to educational anthropology. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979.

Heyneman, S. Instruction in the mother tongue: The question of logistics. Unpublished report, the World Bank, Education Department, April, 1979.

Kovoho, R. Teacher training for tokples pri-skuls. Paper presented to an Extraordinary Meeting of the Faculty of Education, University of Papua New Guinea, 1980.

_____. Teacher training for Viles Tok Ples Skuls. In P. Smith and S. Weeks (eds.), 1981.

Lambert, W. and N. Sidoti. The selection of appropriate teaching languages and the use of radio for education in less developed countries. Unpublished reort, The World Bank, Education Department, December, 1979.

Lofland, J. Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1971.

Mackey, W.F. The evaluation of bilingual education. In B. Spolsky and R. Cooper (eds.), 1977.

Macmillan, D. Language policies for African primary education. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1980.

McCall, G.J. and J.L. Simmons (eds.). Issues in participant observation: A text and reader. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

Mehan, H. Ethnography of bilingual education. In H.T. Trueba et al. (eds.), 1981.

Murphy, J. Getting the facts: A fieldwork guide for evaluators and policy analysts. Santa Monica, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing, 1980.

National Statistical Office. 1980 national population census, pre-release: Summary of final figures. Port Moresby: National Statistical Office, September, 1982.

_____. 1980 national population census, final figures: Census unit populations, North Solomons Province. Port Moresby: National Statistical Office, September, 1982.

Neustupny, J.N. Prospects of "language" problems and policy in developing societies. In Fishman et al. (eds.), 1968.

North Solomons Province. 1983 NSP Education Plan. Arawa: North Solomons Province, 1983.

Patton, M.W. Utilization-focused evaluation. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978.

Paulston, C.B. Implications of language learning theory for language planning: Concerns in bilingual education. Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1974.

Ramos, M., J.V. Aguilar, and B.F. Sibayan. The determination and implementation of language policy. Philippine Center for Language Study Monograph Series, 2. Quezon City, The Philippines: Alemar-Phoenix, 1967.

Rubin, J. Bilingual education and language planning. In B. Spolsky and R. Cooper (eds.), 1977.

Schatzman, L. and A.A. Strauss. Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

Scriven, M. The methodology of evaluation. In R. Tyler, R.M. Gagne, and M. Scriven (eds.), Perspectives of curriculum evaluation. AERA Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation, No. 1. Chicago: Rand McNally Co., 1967.

Spolsky, B. The establishment of language education policy in multilingual societies. In B. Spolsky and R. Cooper (eds.), 1977.

_____. A model for the evaluation of bilingual education. International Review of Education, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1978.

_____, B. Green, and J. Read. A model of the description, analysis and perhaps evaluation of bilingual education. Navajo Reading Study Progress Report, No. 23, 1974.

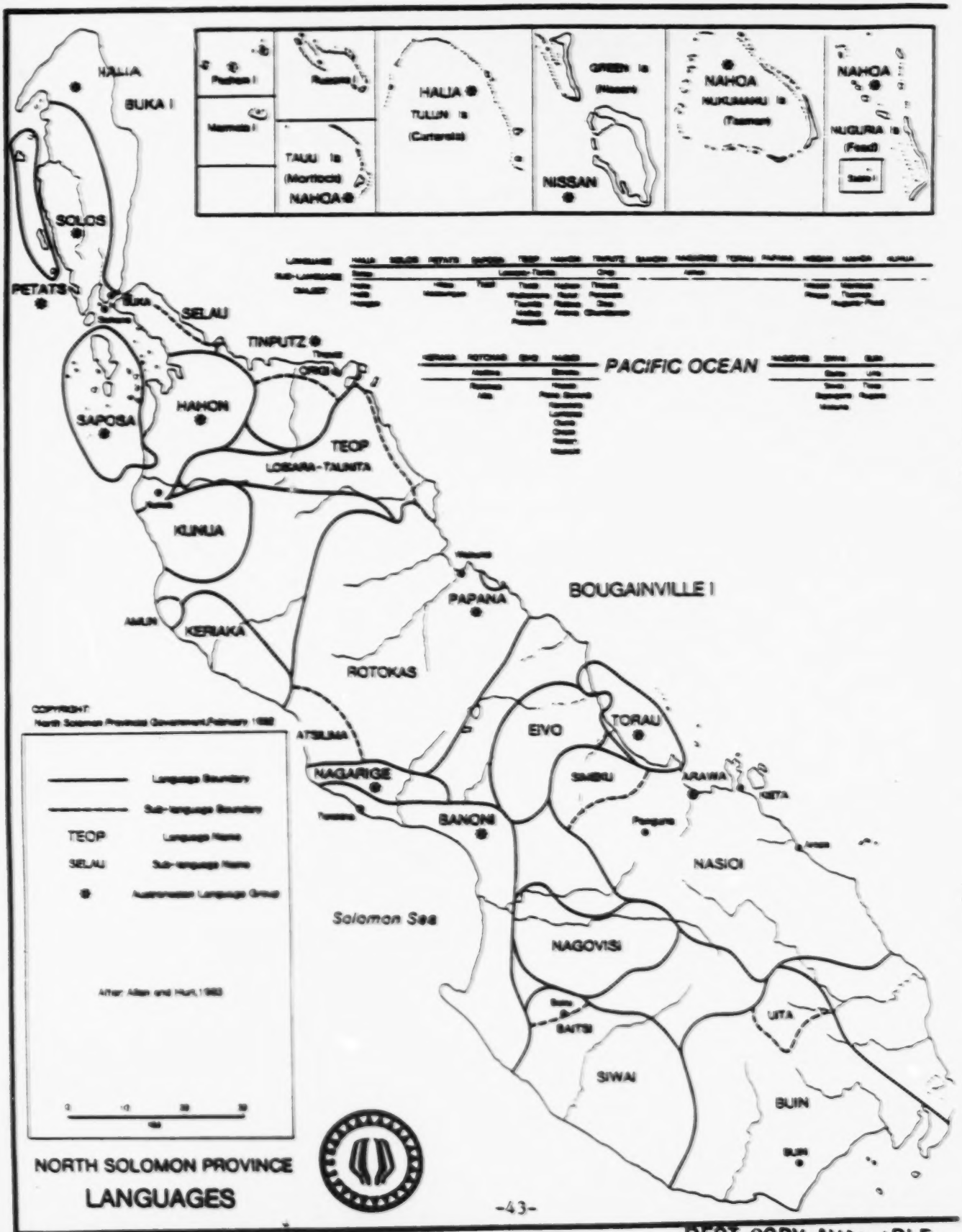
_____ and R. Cooper (eds.). Case studies in bilingual education. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1978.

Thevenin, T. Pedagogical implications of language policy in African schools. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, May, 1980.

Tucker, G.R. and G.A. Cziko. The role of evaluation in bilingual education. In J. Alatis (ed.), 1978.

UNESCO. The use of vernacular languages in education. Monographs on Fundamental Education. Paris: UNESCO, 1953.

Webb, E.J., D.T. Campbell, R.D. Schwartz, L. Sechrest, and J.B. Grove. Nonreactive measures in the social sciences. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SUBJECTS*	PART 1 correct words read (HPS-49)	Comprehension Q's answered (HPS-3)	Time ** 3 pts for reading under school avrge, 0 pts, if not	Dictation (HPS-23)	Total Score (HPS-78)	% Correct	PART 2 correct words read: (HPS-12)	
								%
1. B (boy)	45	3	3	21	72	92%	72	58%
2. B (boy)	49	3	3	22	77	99%	10	83%
3. A (boy)	46	3	0	22	71	91%	9	75%
4. C (boy)	45	2	0	19	66	85%	4	33%
5. C (girl)	ø	ø	ø	ø	0	0%	ø	ø
6. C (boy)	41	3	0	15	59	76%	ø	ø
7. A (boy)	49	2	3	22	76	97%	12	100%
8. B (girl)	46	3	3	22	74	95%	ø	ø
9. A (boy)	49	3	3	23	78	100%	12	100%

*A = Top ⅓ in class
B = Middle ⅓
C = Bottom ⅓

**Average time for Hanahan - 1 min 28 sec

SYMBOL - KEY:- ø = child's ability was below that needed to attempt this part of the test.

(ø)= child was not tested on this part of the test due to time or other factors having nothing to do with the CHILD'S ability.

HPS= Highest possible Score.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BUIN I (LAITARO) SUEJECTS*	PART I correct words read (HPS - 47)	Phonics Q's correct HPS - 3	Time: Sec. for rdng under each. avrge time: Q if not	Dictation HPS - 24	Tot. score HPS = 79	% correct	PART II Correct words read: NEW READING #	%	Comprehension Q's correct HPS - 3	PART III Correct words read: Pudgin Reading: HPS-47 #	%
1. A (girl)	45	3	3	26	77	97	19	100%	3	10	83%
2. A (boy)	47	3	3	25	78	99%	18	95%	3	11	92%
3. A (girl)	47	3	3	25	78	99%	19	100%	3	10	83%
4. B (girl)	45	3	3	23	74	94%	19	100%	3	9	75%
5. B (boy)	47	3	3	26	79	100%	19	100%	3	9	75%
6. B (boy)	46	3	0	24	73	92%	17	89%	3	10	83%
7. B (girl)	46	3	0	24	73	92%	19	100%	3	11	92%
8. C (boy)	37	3	0	23	63	80%	ø	ø.	ø	ø	ø
9. C (girl)	30	3	0	16	49	62%	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
BUIN 2 (IPIRAI)											
1. A (boy)	44	3	3	26	76	96%	19	100%	3	(ø)	(ø)
2. B (boy)	46	3	0	21	70	89%	15	79%	3	9	75%
3. B (boy)	43	3	0	23	69	87%	16	84%	3	9	75%
4. B (boy)	47	3	3	25	78	99%	19	100%	3	(ø)	(ø)
5. B (boy)	44	3	3	22	72	91%	19	100%	3	(ø)	(ø)
6. B (girl)	46	3	3	24	76	96%	19	100%	3	(ø)	(ø)
7. C (girl)	37	3	0	20	60	76%	8	42%	3	(ø)	(ø)
8. C (girl)	8	ø	ø	5	13	16%	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø
9. C (girl)	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø	ø

*A = Top ⅓ of Class
B = Middle ⅓
C = Bottom ⅓

**Average time for Buin I (Laitaro): 1min 87sec.
Average time for Buin 2 (Ipirai) : 1min 21sec.
HPS = Highest Possible Score

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

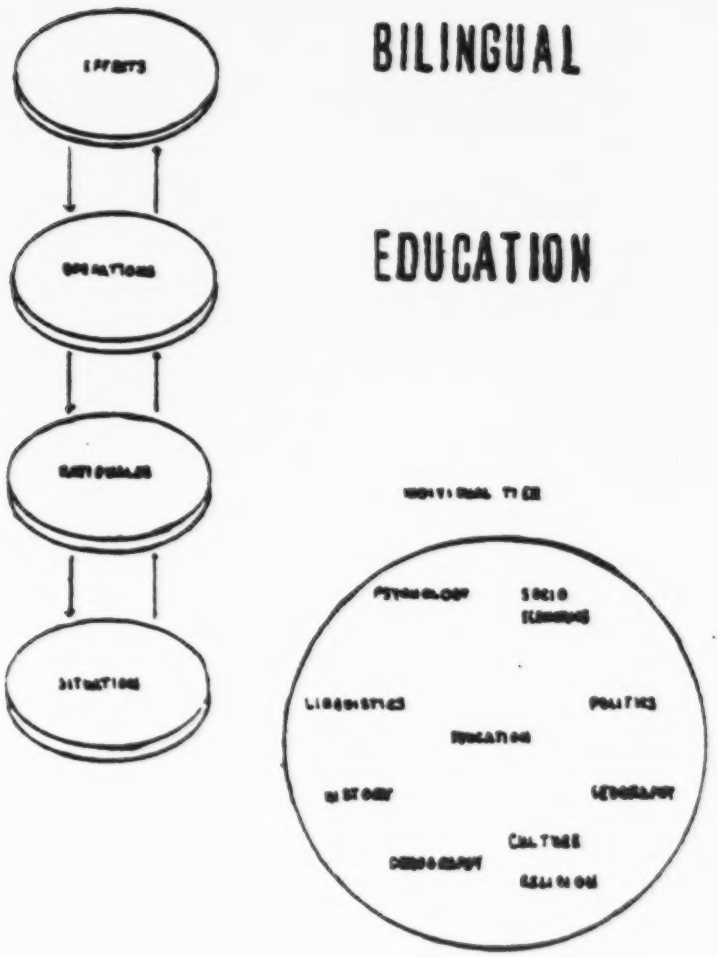


Figure 1. (Spolsky, 1978: 349)

Buka	Buin I	Buin 2
100%	100%	100%
99	99	99
97	99	96
95	97	91
92	94	89
91	92	87
85	92	76
76	80	16
Ø	62	Ø
Average: 82%	90.5%	73%
Average: 92% (Excluding Ø scores)		82%

Table I. Basic Achievement Test Scores

	VTPS	comm. school	% difference
Ipirai (Buin)	85.3%	77.1%	8.2%
Laitaro (Buin)	81.4%	80.1%	1.3%
Hanahan (Buka)	90.9%	85.8%	5.1%

Table II. Comparison of VTPS and Community School Attendance Rates